

AINA CASE STUDY

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

River Cam: Halingway cycle track



The Halingway is well signposted and links into existing rights of way

An improved towpath provides a safe riverside route for walkers and cyclists

The Halingway towpath runs for approximately six kilometres along the banks of the River Cam in Cambridge. This rural reach is lined with pollarded willows, and for more than a century the towpath has been used for a wide range of activities, including rambling, jogging and birdwatching. Rowing coaches use the route to help train their crews and crowds assemble to watch popular rowing races.

Prior to 2005, the Conservators of the River Cam maintained the Halingway through their in-house mowing and tree management programmes. However, during the winter months the grass surface often became muddy and was left suitable for only dedicated walkers and mountain bikes. In 2004 Cambridge County Council selected the Halingway for an upgrade to a cycle track surface since it links into the city's road network and offers a non-motorised alternative to the busy A10.

The County Council secured a £21 million Growth Area Delivery Grant on the basis of the County's projected population and business growth. They also obtained £12 million from the Department of Transport for access and infrastructure developments, and a portion of these funds were used to enhance the Halingway.

The improved towpath now offers a safe and healthy transport option for local people and immediately became a popular commuter route into the city centre, particularly with links to a nearby station. The cycle track also forms part of Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 11. The Fen Rivers Way follows the Halingway, which also forms part of the trans-European E2 long distance walk.

Byelaws prohibit vehicles and the Conservators installed bollards at each end of the track to restrict access to cyclists and pedestrians. However, the increased frequency and speed of cycle traffic has not been popular with local anglers, and some have moved away to find more peaceful fishing locations elsewhere.

Local Sustrans volunteers trim vegetation, but general works are undertaken by the Conservators who hope to use further grants to cover the costs of enhanced maintenance.